A U M

The Sage embraces Unity, and is a model for all under Heaven. He is free from self-display, therefore he shines forth; from self-assertion, therefore he is distinguished; from self-glorification, therefore he has merit; from self-exaltation, therefore he rises superior to all. Inasmuch as he does not strive, there is no one in the world who can strive with him. —LAO TZE.

THEOSOPHY

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A MEDITATION

SO much of hate there is in the world these days, I thought how I could rise above it all, even but for a moment, to see if hate or love is real. For it came to me that all things and beings are sustained on and by the Great Breath. I breathe with the movement of the earth and stars; I breathe with the pulsation of the ocean in calm or storm; I breathe with the soughing of the pines or crash of tempest in the forest; I breathe with the song of birds, joyous in the springtime, or raucous as they strike for prey. I breathe with tigers stalking in the jungle, as with the ants and bees. I breathe with the imperceptible fine breath of babes, and with the wheeze of tottering men. I breathe with the breath of saints, and with criminals and outcasts. Though I can not speak their tongue, I breathe with the brown men of southern seas, with stolid men of the Far North. I breathe with the breath of republics and of tyrannies, of the great, the grasping, the long-visioned, the short-sighted. I breathe with those who love peace, and with those who give themselves to war. How, then, can I hate?

When the Great Breath is once more indrawn, the hates will be no more; tyrannies, harsh judgments, injustices will be no more. But the rhythm of the Great Breath will hold all in the boundless union which is Love. This is the Real. And there are, here and now, Beings in the world who breathe that universal Breath of Love to all men. To see what They see, to know what They know, is to cease to hate any thing or creature upon this earth.

So did I come to find peace in my own heart—for a moment. Surely, will be other moments; then, hours; then, days; and then—a life!

FIGURES OF THE TRANSITION AGE

How man has come to be the complex being that he is and why, are questions that neither Science nor Religion makes conclusive answer to. Science does not pretend to give the solution, religion offers an explanation both illogical and unmeaning. . . . Were we dealing with children, then, indeed, it would be right to lead them on by what may be entirely an illusion. But the day of man's childhood as an immortal being has passed away. He is now grown up, his mind has arrived at the point where it must know, and when, if knowledge be refused, this violation of our being will result in the grossest and vilest superstition or the most appalling materialism. . . . We are now in a transition period, and in the approaching twentieth century there will be a revival of genuine philosophy. The time must come when the really advanced thinkers of the age will be compelled to lay by their indifference, and their scorn and conceit, and follow the lines of philosophical investigation laid down in the *Secret Doctrine.*

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

The present need is recognition by scientific men of social responsibility for contagious diffusion of the scientific attitude: a task not to be accomplished without abandoning once and for all the belief that science is set apart from all other social interests as if possessed of a peculiar holiness. . . . Denial in the name of science of the existence of any such things as moral facts may mark a transitional stage thoughtlessly taken to be final. . . . Anything that obscures the fundamentally moral nature of the social problem is harmful, no matter whether it proceeds from the side of physical or psychological theory. Any doctrine that eliminates or even obscures the function of choice of values . . . weakens personal responsibility for judgment and for action. . . . A culture which permits science to destroy traditional values but which distrusts its power to create new ones is a culture which is destroying itself. —JOHN DEWEY.*

THE great contribution of John Dewey to the process of transition spoken of by Mr. Judge has been his declaration that there is no truth except *living* truth, that profession is meaningless without practice. In its larger significance, the whole pragmatic movement is essentially a moral criticism of the fatal defect of western civilization—the separation of thought and action. According to the pragmatist, the truth of an idea is discovered only by putting it to work. If it won't work, it isn't true.

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* *Freedom and Culture.*

Pragmatism is not a philosophy of the schools, but a moralistic reaction to modern scholasticism; it is, in fact, a genuine revival of the humanitarianism of early western science. We sometimes forget that the great scientific movement was largely inspired by moral fervor. The early popularizers of scientific ideas were true lovers of mankind who saw what incalculable suffering the Church had brought on the human race. They were enemies, not of the pantheistic deity of the ancients, but of the jealous Jehovah whose deluded followers had made European lands run with rivers of blood. If revelation were the "word of God," how could it lead to such horrors? And, they argued, if we can destroy belief in this "God," men will stop killing one another for "His" sake. They were successful in that great endeavor, but as the "religion of reason" which they substituted for Christian dogma gradually became secularized, the moral idealism of its founders died away, leaving behind only the non-moral *method* of science, divorced from its original inspiration. Ethics became merely a department of philosophical speculation. If scientific truth could be discovered without reference to moral verities, then moral truth should be available to philosophers, irrespective of its practice. Thus, during the scientific age, while religions fell into lingering decay, science continued with its irresponsible conquest of nature, and moralists spun out speculative theories comprehensible only to a few pundits.

These unnatural divisions were bound to have catastrophic effects on society. It was to avert the total collapse of modern civilization that H. P. Blavatsky brought the *synthesis* of science, religion, and philosophy, as a plank of salvation for those who could see that social unity was possible only by uniting the *inner* life of mankind. She labored in the hope that the few who recognized this truth would build the foundation for a better society in the future. Only time will reveal the measure of success achieved by those who have followed the path she showed.

The educational philosophy of John Dewey is also a teaching of synthesis, but at a different level from that of Theosophy. Dr. Dewey says, "Learn by doing." Theosophy says, "Live the life and you will know the doctrine." The real issue, of course, lies in the question: "What is *worth* learning?" Pragmatism has no answer that the common man can understand and apply. It is a form of thought that belongs peculiarly to this cycle of transition.

The Secret Doctrine states as a law of egoic evolution that the soul must exhaust the experience of every plane before it can rise to the next level of perception and action. With this principle in

mind, we can understand more easily the stubborn distrust of all metaphysics and intuitive sources of knowledge felt by even the best disposed of modern thinkers. It may be said that Theosophy is meaningless without the conception of the *Gnosis*—a body of knowledge with its Knowers and Teachers. But unfortunately, the claim of the Church to a Divine Revelation marked the ultimate corruption of the idea of the gnosis. Hence, that part of western tradition which represents the titanic effort of freedom-loving men to throw off the shackles of a false revelation is set dead against admission of the existence of a body of knowledge of *any* description. Pragmatism fails to distinguish between metaphysical principles and theological dogmas. Until the energies of that great reaction are exhausted, it will be difficult for free spirits to recognize the possibility of a true gnosis. This, of course, applies to the race as a whole, and not to individuals.

What, then, are the steps which will precede and hasten the decline of skepticism? First and foremost, there must be perception of the universal need of *affirmative* ethical principles. Pragmatism is not really a philosophy, it is only a process *in* philosophy. It offers no values. Pragmatists, in short, will become skeptical of their skepticism when they see that it doesn't "work." Then, if there are those who exemplify in their lives the fruitfulness of "learning by doing" certain simple moral verities, as theosophists are attempting to do, the exhaustion of the old denials may be immediately followed by recognition of the *practical* value of a "self-compelling basis for ethics." Even today, some thoughtful pragmatists will readily admit the moral force in the ideas of Karma and Reincarnation, but hesitate to adopt them. The habit of doubt is too strong.

The arguments of the pragmatists may be briefly summarized. There is no gnosis because the revelations of religion do not work in practice. When men say they know the truth, then they no longer seek it. If their actions betray ignorance, as shown by so-called "Christian" civilization, then we may be sure the claim of truth is false. Abstract speculation is equally useless. It has not led to beneficent action. There is no truth "up there" if you can't make it work "down here." Says Mr. Dewey:

> Theory separated from concrete doing and making is empty and futile; practice then becomes an immediate seizure of opportunities and enjoyments which conditions afford without the direction which theory—knowledge and ideas—has power to supply. . . . Construction of ideals in general and their sentimental glorification are easy; the responsibilities both of studious thought and of action are shirked. Persons having the advantage of positions of leisure and who find

> pleasure in abstract theorizing—a most delightful indulgence to those to whom it appeals—have a large measure of liability for a cultivated diffusion of ideals and aims that are separated from the conditions which are the means of actualization. Then other persons who find themselves in positions of social power and authority readily claim to be the bearers and defenders of ideal ends in church and state. They then use the prestige and authority their representative capacity as guardians of the highest ends confers on them to cover actions taken in behalf of the harshest and narrowest of material ends (*The Quest for Certainty,* pp. 281-2).

Dr. Dewey's critical attack on traditional European philosophy should be of special interest to the theosophical student, as an illuminating illustration of why H. P. Blavatsky made no more than incidental use of any of the metaphysical conceptions of western intellectual tradition. They were destined to be discarded. Because western philosophy in its vain search for "absolute truth" had led its devotees farther and farther away from the immediate problems and sufferings of their fellow men, the pragmatists became enemies of all metaphysics. Plato's world of immutable ideas, the archetypes of which forms in the manifested world are but the transient and imperfect reflection, is repudiated with evangelical fervor. Shall we, Dr. Dewey asks, forget the world in order to search for the Absolute? All transcendental philosophy he identifies as the pursuit of what theosophists would call the *Dharmakaya* path. The noumenal world, the realm of essences, is, for Dr. Dewey, a lotus-eaters' paradise, of which men dream in selfish neglect of the problems of here and now. What is the use, he would say, of developing abstruse theories about "things in themselves," when humanity is enslaved in the world of phenomena? He will have none of the brooding on ultimates that the *Sankhya* doctrine proposes, but is wholly and exclusively a believer in the Yoga of action.

The great change wrought by Dr. Dewey in modern thought was accomplished by restating the fundamental issues of philosophy in pragmatic terms. Traditional idealism is concerned with the inner essences of things. But if speculative theories about these essences are not ratified by practical action in the world of men, and consequent benefits to society, then theories of essence are delusive. Dr. Dewey, therefore, makes all definitions conform to the observed activities of the things defined. The nature of mind, for example, is not to be discovered by reasoning about what mind logically "ought" to be, as a substantial element in some speculative system, but will be found in studying how the mind acts. Mind *is* what mind *does*. This redefinition in operational terms has resulted in a new vocabu-

lary; all the old words have now new "activity" meanings. The word *Self,* for instance, means one thing to the student of the Upanishads, but something altogether different to the pragmatist or instrumentalist. When Dewey says "self" he means a self that "is capable of including within itself a number of inconsistent selves, of unharmonized dispositions." Manifestly, he is not dealing with what the theosophist means by self at all, but rather with the protean personality. A little reading in Dr. Dewey's book, *Human Nature and Conduct,* shows that he has discarded the idea of an inner, unitary self because it is traditionally a *separate* self in western metaphysics. He cannot accept the theory that morality is a compact between the individual soul and God. "A false psychology of an isolated self and a subjective morality," he says, "shuts out from morals the things important to it, acts and habits in their objective consequences." A chapter in this book is named, "Morality is Social."

Throughout, Dr. Dewey's works have this profoundly ethical tone. His philosophy is constructed in reaction to the personal mysticism of the West, in which the aspirant seeks private communion with the deity. He knows or recognizes no other mystical tradition. Had the *Bhagavad-Gita,* instead of the lucubrations of Saint Augustine, been the devotional manual of western mystics, our history might have been a happier one. Not all mysticism has "private, individual salvation" for its end, as Dr. Dewey imagines. He thus falls among those spoken of by Mr. Judge in his notes to the fifth discourse of the *Gita:* "It is the habit of many to say that, if these doctrines are followed to the letter, the result is a being who cares for nothing but the calmness which comes from extinction in the Supreme Spirit—that is, the extreme of selfishness . . . the sequence of the personal aggrandizement idea, which is the bane of the present age." Mr. Judge exposes this misconception of true idealism by quoting Krishna's statement: "Effacement in the Supreme Spirit is gained by the right-seeing sage whose sins are exhausted, who hath cut asunder all doubts, whose senses and organs are under control, and *who is devoted to the well-being of all creatures.*" In this passage, the italicized words are all-important.

Differing from the systems of idealism condemned by Dr. Dewey, Theosophy emphasizes the absolute necessity of practical brotherhood. High philosophy, asceticism, personal virtues—all these are barren when pursued in avoidance of the practical service of one's fellows. Mr. Judge wrote "Living the Higher Life" to impress this truth upon theosophical students. The world, he said, is inclined during Kali Yuga always to begin at the "wrong end"—to mistake

the sublime qualities of the perfected man as the means of progress for the *beginner*—whereas the real means of progress for us mortals are the simple "duties to our own families and to our own nation, or 'kindness' and 'patriotism' in the highest ethical sense of the terms." Failure to discharge these immediate obligations brings terrible karmic penalties, described at length in this article. Turning to Dr. Dewey, we find a similar criticism of modern life:

> "Ideals" are thought to be remote and inaccessible of attainment; they are too high and fine to be sullied by realization. They serve vaguely to arouse "inspiration," but they do not evoke and direct strivings for embodiment in actual existence. . . . The ineffectiveness in action of "ideals" is due precisely to the supposition that means and ends are not on exactly the same level with respect to the attention and care they demand. . . . Sentimental attachment and subjective eulogy take the place of action. . . . After a polite and pious deference has been paid to "ideals," men feel free to devote themselves to matters which are more immediate and more pressing. . . . Men hoist the banner of the ideal, and then march in the direction that concrete conditions suggest and reward. . . . To many persons, the idea that the ends professed by morals are impotent save as they are connected with the working machinery of economic life seems like deflowering the purity of moral values and obligations (*The Quest for Certainty,* pp. 279-81, 283).

The curious thing about John Dewey's philosophy is that the "ultimate truths" which he dislikes so much in the abstract are directly implied on every page of his writings. Knowledge which is not related to the general good is not knowledge. This is simply another way of stating the metaphysical principle that the unity of the whole is the highest reality. Then, he calls for the use of scientific method—the study of the operation of the laws of nature, or "Karma"—in order to determine the best means for the service of the whole. His observations on what he would consider to be an "ideal" religion, reveal at once the great moral force of the movement headed by the progressive educators:

> Religion has been distorted into a possession—or burden—of a limited part of human nature, of a limited portion of humanity which finds no way to universalize religion except by imposing its own dogmas and ceremonies upon others. . . . Religion as a sense of the whole is the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied. For individuality signifies unique connections in the whole . . . every act may carry within itself a consoling and supporting consciousness of the whole to which it belongs and which in some sense belongs to it. . . . There is a conceit fostered by perversion of religion which assimilates the universe to our personal

> desires; but there is also a conceit of carrying the load of the universe from which religion liberates us. Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal. The life of the community in which we live and have our being is the fit symbol of this relationship. The acts in which we express our appreciation of the ties which bind us to others are its only rites and ceremonies (*Human Nature and Conduct,* pp. 330-32).

Dr. Dewey is himself, in Mazzini's phrase, a "living religion." These ideals, which can exist and be maintained only in practice, have saturated the vanguard of progressive thought in the United States and literally transformed the American scene in a thousand subtle and indescribable ways. The life of the true teacher is a life consecrated to active service, and this condition Dr. Dewey has abundantly fulfilled. The constructive side of his work, and of his many colleagues, is to be found in the extraordinary changes in American education during the past several decades.

As critics, the pragmatists have been equally valuable, for while theosophists are spreading the same doctrine of *works,* based on the teachings of Karma and Reincarnation—those simple verities which alone give *reasons* for right action and service—Dr. Dewey and his followers have been sweeping out the skandhas of out-moded metaphysics like cobwebs in an attic due for an airing. Superficially, these are opposed activities, but in reality they are complementary. When, in the course of cyclic progress, the path of the Theosophical Movement broadens to encompass and meet directly the work of public education, all the ghosts of theology will have been laid by these devoted iconoclasts. When the ground is clear, the need for true metaphysics will become plain, and a new start will be possible on the ground cleared of the intellectual rubbish of the ages. Then, and then only, will the "really advanced thinkers of the age" take up in earnest the "lines of philosophical investigation laid down in the *Secret Doctrine.*"

Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom, and trade, and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

THE FIELD-WORK OF MIND

II

CONSCIOUSNESS is universal, from atom to perfected man, but its degree varies far more than the perceptible differences among the forms through which it finds expression. Consciousness is the universal witness, on this our plane, of the presence of Deity—the One Life. Emerging as *self*-consciousness in the human kingdom, it not only varies greatly in degree, but because of the duality of Manas its expressed potency may be enormously increased or diminished during the life of the individual.

H. P. B. divides human consciousness into three forms: the sensuous, the intellectual, and the spiritual. "The spiritual consciousness moves among the hidden causes of the sensuous and the intellectual." Among these hidden causes the seeds of Karma lie forever concealed from all but the very few. The overwhelming majority of men center their consciousness in the two lower forms, ignoring the spiritual. But through the spiritual form alone can the true nature of man's evolution in matter be known. Writing of the occult synthesis provided in *The Secret Doctrine,* Mr. Judge observes, "That the authors of the ancient wisdom have spoken from at least two whole planes of conscious experience beyond that of our everyday 'sense-perception' is to us inconceivable, yet such is the fact,"—which explains why "the ancient wisdom by its very vastness has escaped recognition in modern times." Pointing out that the higher planes represented in man by the sixth and seventh "senses" are "not yet unfolded to the average humanity," he meets the objection of the agnostic by asking: "Why should the modern advocate of evolution be shocked and staggered by such a disclosure? It but justifies his hypothesis and extends its theater."

"Consciousness is the seat of the real life of the individual." In the lower kingdoms it is imprisoned by the form which the monad only "overshadows"; but the Real in man is not within the form: his consciousness is seated in Higher Manas, and he seeks, through the ray of lower Manas, to expand its powers in matter. To accomplish this end he must alter the nature of the material he uses, bringing its seat of conscious life to higher levels and building a brain capable of sustained correlation with spiritual impulses. Until this state is achieved, his consciousness will oscillate between the sensuous and the intellectual plane, seldom rising to that of the spiritual. But once the whole nature becomes sensitive to the highest ideation, the

individual ascends the upward curve of the arc of evolution and reaches a point somewhat in advance of that upon which he entered eons ago as a fully conscious spiritual being. The gain is due to the knowledge acquired during the cycle of experience.

That consciousness may become focused in one basis or another is readily observed, for in action, consciousness is thought. For instance, thoughts connected with the need of food—the simplest and most primitive of desires pertaining to the body—arise through the lower physical sheaths. These thoughts may be pleasant, or otherwise, but they have no further import than relief from hunger. But if the man occupies himself with the effect his controlled thoughts will have upon the lives that go to make up the food entering his body, the consciousness is then focused in a much less material sheath. Could a graph be made of the rise and fall of consciousness, passing from its focus in the more material to the higher sheaths, many fluctuations would appear on the curves. Only rarely would a sustained level in the higher planes be revealed, and if the graph were to cover a lifetime, a wide gamut would be seen. At death it is upon such a living graph that the eye of the Spiritual Ego looks; no fluctuations up or down escape the inner eye during its solemn task of reviewing the life just ended.

Consciousness always requires a basis through which to function, just as a camera needs its lense to focus the image. The basis through which the spiritual consciousness may obtain its focus is Manas united to Buddhi. The motivation of altruism frees the Immortal Thinker from the veils of sensuous life, enabling Him to control causation on the inner planes of his being. Sharing the immortality of the monad, the Divine Ego has the power to correlate acts of the personality with the greater cycle of spiritual evolution. In this effort the co-operative impulses of Great Nature are added to the power exercised by individual mind, and the field of its conscious action is immeasurably extended.

While consciousness blazes the trail for mind on an ever widening frontier, the countless physical lives making up the body exhibit traits which prove the presence of intelligence and record past motivations for good or evil. The action of these lives is now rendered visible through the scientific development of motion pictures taken through the microscope. R. L. Ditmars, in *Confessions of a Scientist,* relates:

> These films showed the action of different kinds of cells. There were "good" and "bad" cells. In some instances the good cells had everything in order. While they behaved like miniature octopi, they seemed to be steadily house cleaning. Particles of debris were carried

about, or swallowed and thus disposed of. Meandering cells that got in the way were pounced upon as vigorously as suspicious loafers in a police clean-up. Then again, I saw mobs of cells gone wild and congregating in masses. The loyal types were outnumbered and unable to cope with them. They were hurled back from the rioting crowds. Coming from all directions were numbers swelling the mob, seemingly intent upon fusing their bodies into an abnormal mass, the beginning of malignant tissue. Thus, it seems, these minute forms can be sane or insane, sober or drunk, and those succumbing to the latter state may run wild and do crazy things.

Dr. Ditmars repeats a conversation with a laboratory expert who had spoken of a mysterious force which adjusts the action of the cells to restore harmony. He avoids naming this power by asking, "Who can define electricity?" What Dr. Ditmars saw on the screen pertains to the grossest particles of the physical body (the "destroyers" and "preservers" referred to in *The Secret Doctrine* I, 262-3 fn.), but the force mentioned is the intelligent fohatic energy which steps down through the seven planes to impress cosmic ideation upon matter. Fohat is the spirit of electricity. Science refuses any natural association of intelligence with force, but Theosophy points to the endless correlations between consciousness, intelligence, and force. They are, in fact, inseparable.

In passing, one may ask the skeptical, by what is the association of ideas accomplished? Science has pointed out that the brain cortex has in its microscopic cell structure a vaster system of exchanges than that contained in all the telephone systems of our continent. Can one believe, with such an analogy before him, that the instantaneous arising in the brain of associated ideas, events, and actions from the storehouse of memory, is caused by other than intelligent forces? In "Psychic and Noëtic Action," H. P. B. wrote:

> . . . all the organs of the body originate according to their animal needs and desires the electro-vital sparks that illuminate the field of consciousness in the Lower Ego; and it is these sparks which in their turn awaken to function the reminiscences in it. The whole human body is a vast sounding board, in which each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, or call it instinct if you will.

The responsiveness of these centers of organic memory may be accentuated or reduced, depending upon the individual will and the habits of thought it engenders. Modern studies of the nervous system have established the physical basis for habit formation as lying in the *synapses*—those mysterious junction-points, with various side

connections, between the neurons or conduction lines along which nerve impulses travel. Synapses differ from ordinary nerve fiber in that they offer a measure of resistance to impulses and are the means by which habitual responses to stimuli may be "switched" to other and better reactions. Much of the vast literature of modern psychology on the subject of the learning process is devoted to a study of synapses. The principle is quite simple: A nerve impulse travels along a neuron, arriving at a synapse which presents alternative actions. If one of these two or more paths has been habitually followed upon reception of a given stimulus, the passage through that synapse is said to be "facilitated," and to change the reaction requires deliberate exertion of the will. By repeated effort, the old pathway may be "blocked off," and the impulse made to travel in a new direction, bringing the type of reaction which the individual deems more desirable. This law of learning seems to apply in all directions, whether it be in the simple correction of a habit of striking the wrong key on a typewriter, or the reaction of irritation at some unpleasant trait in another person, or in altering habitual associations of ideas from bad to good. All this, however, is but the *physiology* of neural processes, yet nevertheless a striking confirmation of the Theosophic teaching regarding the function of psychic intelligence in the human organism. A passage taken from one of the letters of Robert Crosbie shows how occult psychology is supported and supplemented by these modern studies of the nervous system.

> Thought, being self-reproducing, would suggest crystallized centers, but they are more than "crystallized," if we would take into consideration that everything is conscious. Each thought stirs to action some form of life; according to the nature of the thought is the nature of the life stirred and guided, the permanence of the thought-action depending upon the energy put into it. I think that the subsidence of the direct energy leaves a latent tendency in the conscious lives to respond to analogous or similar energy. Some of these impressions may be so deep as to have left respondent foci in the physical brain; hence, remembrance is more easily recalled into action; other impressions, not so deep, are obliterated by subsequent ones as far as brain foci are concerned, but remain in some one or other of the sheaths of the brain, and are recollected by the proper stimulus, which may come from similar thought, or from the impressions of the organs or cells of the body.

The difficulty in understanding that such seemingly "automatic" reactions are expressions of *intelligence* is born from the conception of intelligence as limited to the conscious determinations which govern our relations with externalities. But intelligence resembles its parent consciousness in possessing countless degrees and modes. It is

this fact which places upon man his great responsibility during his journey through matter, for through his thinking he inevitably harmonizes or disrupts the collective intelligence of the forces within his being; and let it be remembered that a man's thinking always assumes a general trend during a lifetime, a direction that can only be changed by indomitable will.

The "mob scene" of the cells described by Dr. Ditmars may be taken as revealing by analogy what occurs on the moral plane of man's being. Substitute *elementals,* informed and ensouled by thoughts, for the hosts of "good" and "bad" cells, and the correspondence is plain. Just as the "bad" cells, when they accumulate so rapidly that the supporting system of nerves and blood vessels has not time to form, cause malignant tissue, so, in time, elementals ensouled by evil thoughts swarm to the sore spots of the moral nature and demoralize the mind, resulting in the overthrow of character. His bad habits become an army, and bear the offender off, "a captive slave." "If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thine own creations, the children of thy thoughts. . . ."

Mind is a battlefield as real, its forces as merciless, as any over which the armies of mankind are raging today. No mental blackout can obliterate the enemy, nor does ignorance ever protect the individual. The decisions of this inner war are made under the immutable justice of Karma.

(*To be concluded.*)

The Light in Man

Mind is the latent or active potentiality of *Cosmic Ideation,* the essence of every form, the basis of every law, the potency of every principle in the universe. Human thought is the reflection or reproduction in the realm of man's consciousness of these forms, laws, and principles. Hence man senses and apprehends nature just as nature unfolds in him. When, therefore, the Monad has passed through the form of the animal ego, involved and unfolded the human form, the higher triad of principles awakens from the sleep of ages and overshadowed by the "Manasaputra" and *built into* its essence and substance. How could man epitomize Cosmos if he did not touch it at every point and involve it in every principle? If man's being is woven in the web of destiny, his potencies and possibilities take hold of divinity as the woof and pattern of his boundless life. Why then should he grow weary or disheartened? —W. Q. J.

WHAT ARE THE THEOSOPHISTS?

[The first number of the *Theosophist* appeared in India in October, 1879. In this issue H. P. Blavatsky devoted two articles to discussion of Thesophy, and of Theosophists and their work. The first, "What is Theosophy?" was reprinted in these pages last month. We now present the other, "What are the Theosophists?" as the Teacher's statement of what it means to be a student and lover of the Wisdom-Religion.—Editors, THEOSOPHY.]

ARE they what they claim to be—students of natural law, of ancient and modern philosophy, and even of exact science? Are they Deists, Atheists, Socialists, Materialists, or Idealists; or are they but a schism of modern Spiritualism, — mere visionaries? Are they entitled to any consideration, as capable of discussing philosophy and promoting real science; or should they be treated with the compassionate toleration which one gives to "harmless enthusiasts"? The Theosophical Society has been variously charged with a belief in "miracles," and "miracle-working"; with a secret political object—like the Carbonari; with being spies of an autocratic Czar; with preaching socialistic and nihilistic doctrines; and, *mirabile dictu,* with having a covert understanding with the French Jesuits, to disrupt modern Spiritualism for a pecuniary consideration! With equal violence they have been denounced as dreamers, by the American Positivists; as fetish-worshippers, by some of the New York press; as revivalists of "mouldy superstitions," by the Spiritualists; as infidel emissaries of Satan, by the Christian Church; as the very types of *"gobe-mouche,"* by Professor W. B. Carpenter, F. R. S.; and, finally, and most absurdly, some Hindu opponents, with a view to lessening their influence, have flatly charged them with the employment of *demons* to perform certain phenomena. Out of all this pother of opinions, one fact stands conspicuous—the Society, its members, and their views, are deemed of enough importance to be discussed and denounced: *Men slander only those whom they hate—or fear.*

But, if the Society has had its enemies and traducers, it has also had its friends and advocates. For every word of censure, there has been a word of praise. Beginning with a party of about a dozen earnest men and woman, a month later its numbers had so increased as to necessitate the hiring of a public hall for its meetings; within two years, it had working branches in European countries. Still later, it found itself in alliance with the Indian Arya Samaj, headed by the learned Pandit Dayánand Saraswati Swami, and the Ceylonese Buddhists, under the erudite H. Sumangala, High Priest of Adam's Peak and President of the Widyodaya College, Colombo.

He who would seriously attempt to fathom the psychological sciences, must come to the sacred land of ancient Aryâvarta. None is older than she in esoteric wisdom and civilization, however fallen may be her poor shadow—modern India. Holding this country, as we do, for the fruitful hot-bed whence proceeded all subsequent philosophical systems, to this source of all psychology and philosophy a portion of our Society has come to learn its ancient wisdom and ask for the impartation of its weird secrets. Philology has made too much progress to require at this late day a demonstration of this fact of the primogenitive nationality of Aryâvart. The unproved and prejudiced hypothesis of modern Chronology is not worthy of a moment's thought, and it will vanish in time like so many other unproved hypotheses. The line of philosophical heredity, from Kapila through Epicurus to James Mill; from Patanjali through Plotinus to Jacob Böhme, can be traced like the course of a river through a landscape. One of the objects of the Society's organization was to examine the too transcendent views of the Spiritualists in regard to the powers of disembodied spirits; and, having told them what, in our opinion at least, a portion of their phenomena are *not,* it will become incumbent upon us now to show what they are. So apparent is it that it is in the East, and especially in India, that the key to the alleged "supernatural" phenomena of the Spiritualists must be sought, that it has recently been conceded in the Allahabad *Pioneer* (Aug. 11th, 1879), an Anglo-Indian daily journal which has not the reputation of saying what it does not mean. Blaming the men of science who "intent upon physical discovery, for some generations have been too prone to neglect super-physical investigation," it mentions "the new wave of doubt" (spiritualism) which has "latterly disturbed this conviction." To a large number of persons, including many of high culture and intelligence, it adds, "the supernatural has again asserted itself as a fit subject of inquiry and research. And there are plausible hypotheses in favour of the idea that among the 'sages' of the East . . . there may be found in a higher degree than among the more modernised inhabitants of the West traces of those personal peculiarities, whatever they may be, which are required as a condition precedent to the occurrence of supernatural phenomena." And then, unaware that the cause he pleads is one of the chief aims and objects of our Society, the editorial writer remarks that it is "the only direction in which, it seems to us, the efforts of the Theosophists in India might possibly be useful. The leading members of the Theosophical Society in India are known to be very advanced students of occult phenomena, already, and we cannot but hope that their professions of interest in Oriental

philosophy . . . may cover a reserved intention of carrying out explorations of the kind we indicate."

While, as observed, one of our objects, it yet is but one of many; the most important of which is to revive the work of Ammonius Saccas, and make various nations remember that they are the children "of one mother." As to the transcendental side of the ancient Theosophy, it is also high time that the Theosophical Society should explain. With how much, then, of this nature-searching, God-seeking science of the ancient Aryan and Greek mystics, and of the powers of modern spiritual mediumship, does the Society agree? Our answer is:—with it all. But if asked what it believes in, the reply will be:—"*as a body*—Nothing." The Society, as a body, has no creed, as creeds are but the shells around spiritual knowledge; and Theosophy in its fruition is spiritual knowledge itself—the very essence of philosophical and theistic enquiry. Visible representative of Universal Theosophy, it can be no more sectarian than a Geographical Society, which represents universal geographical exploration without caring whether the explorers be of one creed or another. The religion of the Society is an algebraical equation, in which so long as the sign = of equality is not omitted, each member is allowed to substitute quantities of his own, which better accord with climatic and other exigencies of his native land, with the idiosyncrasies of his people, or even with his own. Having no accepted creed, our Society is very ready to give and take, to learn and teach, by practical experimentation, as opposed to mere passive and credulous acceptance of enforced dogma. It is willing to accept every result claimed by any of the foregoing schools or systems, that can be logically and experimentally demonstrated. Conversely, it can take nothing on mere faith, no matter by whom the demand may be made.

But, when we come to consider ourselves individually, it is quite another thing. The Society's members represent the most varied nationalities and races, and were born and educated in the most dissimilar creeds and social conditions. Some of them believe in one thing, others in another. Some incline towards the ancient *magic,* or secret wisdom that was taught in the sanctuaries, which was the very opposite of supernaturalism or diabolism; others in modern spiritualism, or intercourse with the spirits of the dead; still others in mesmerism or animal magnetism, or only an occult dynamic force in nature. A certain number have scarcely yet acquired any definite belief, but are in a state of attentive expectancy; and there are even those who call themselves materialists, in a certain sense. Of atheists and bigoted sectarians of any religion, there are none in the Society;

for the very fact of a man's joining it proves that he is in search of the final truth as to the ultimate essence of things. If there be such a thing as a speculative atheist, which philosophers may deny, he would have to reject both cause and effect, whether in this world of matter, or in that of spirit. There may be members who, like the poet Shelley, have let their imagination soar from cause to prior cause *ad infinitum,* as each in its turn became logically transformed into a result necessitating a prior cause, until they have thinned the Eternal into a mere mist. But even they are not atheist in the speculative sense, whether they identify the material forces of the universe with the functions with which the theists endow their God, or otherwise; for once that they cannot free themselves from the conception of the abstract ideal of power, cause, necessity, and effect, they can be considered as atheists only in respect to a personal God, and not to the Universal Soul of the Pantheist. On the other hand the bigoted sectarian, fenced in, as he is, with a creed upon every paling of which is written the warning "No Thoroughfare," can neither come out his enclosure to join the Theosophical Society, nor, if he could, has it room for one whose very religion forbids examination. The very root idea of the Society is free and fearless investigation.

As a body, the Theosophical Society holds that all original thinkers and investigators of the hidden side of nature whether materialists—those who find matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," or spiritualists—that is, those who discover in spirit the source of all energy and of matter as well, were and are, properly, Theosophists. For to be one, one need not necessarily recognize the existence of any special God or a deity. One need but worship the spirit of living nature, and try to identify oneself with it. To revere that *Presence,* the invisible Cause, which is yet ever manifesting itself in its incessant results; the intangible, omnipotent, and omnipresent Proteus: indivisible in its Essence, and eluding form, yet appearing under all and every form; who is here and there, and everywhere and nowhere; is ALL, and NOTHING; ubiquitous yet one; the Essence filling, binding, bounding, containing everything; contained in all. It will, we think, be seen now, that whether classed as Theists, Pantheists or Atheists, such men are near kinsmen to the rest. Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.

With every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied. It is likewise the ally of honest science, as distinguished from much that passes for *exact,* physical science, so long as the latter does not poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics.

And it is also the ally of every honest religion, — to wit: a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to the others. Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, though even this mind be claiming a direct revelation. And, as this Society which allows the widest sweep in the realms of the pure ideal, is no less firm in the sphere of facts, its deference to modern science and its just representatives is sincere. Despite all their lack of a higher spiritual intuition, the world's debt to the representatives of modern physical science is immense; hence, the Society endorses heartily the noble and indignant protest of that gifted and eloquent preacher, the Rev. O. B. Frothingham, against those who try to undervalue the services of our great naturalists. "Talk of Science as being irreligious, atheistic," he exclaimed in a recent lecture, delivered at New York, "Science is creating a new idea of God. It is due to Science that we have any conception at all of a *living* God. If we do not become atheists one of these days under the maddening effect of Protestantism, it will be due to Science, because it is disabusing us of hideous illusions that tease and embarrass us, and putting us in the way of knowing how to reason about the things we see. . . ."

And it is also due to the unremitting labors of such Orientalists as Sir W. Jones, Max Müller, Burnouf, Colebrooke, Haug, St. Hilaire, and so many others, that the Society, as a body, feels equal respect and veneration for Vedic, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, and other old religions of the world; and, a like brotherly feeling toward its Hindu, Sinhalese, Parsi, Jain, Hebrew, and Christian members as individual students of "self," of nature, and of the divine in nature.

Born in the United States of America, the Society was constituted on the model of its Mother Land. The latter, omitting the name of God from its constitution lest it should afford a pretext one day to

make a state religion, gives absolute equality to all religions in its laws. All support and each is in turn protected by the State. The Society, modelled upon this constitution, may fairly be termed a "Republic of Conscience."

We have now, we think, made clear why our members, as individuals, are free to stay outside or inside any creed they please, provided they do not pretend that none but themselves shall enjoy the privilege of conscience, and try to force their opinions upon the others. In this respect the Rules of the Society are very strict. It tries to act upon the wisdom of the old Buddhistic axiom, "Honour thine own faith, and do not slander that of others"; echoed back in our present century, in the "Declaration of Principles" of the Brahmo Samaj, which so nobly states that: "no sect shall be vilified, ridiculed, or hated." In Section VI of the Revised Rules of the Theosophical Society, recently adopted in General Council, at Bombay, is this mandate: "It is not lawful for any officer of the Parent Society to express, by word or act, any hostility to, or preference for, any one section (sectarian division, or group within the Society) more than another. All must be regarded and treated as equally the objects of the Society's solicitude and exertions. All have an equal right to have the essential features of their religious belief laid before the tribunal of an impartial world." In their individual capacity, members may, when attacked, occasionally break this Rule, but, nevertheless, as officers they are restrained, and the Rule is strictly enforced during the meetings. For, above all human sects stands Theosophy in its abstract sense; Theosophy which is too wide for any of them to contain but which easily contains them.

In conclusion, we may state that, broader and far more universal in its views than any existing mere scientific Society, it has *plus* science its belief in every possibility, and determined will to penetrate into those unknown spiritual regions which exact science pretends that its votaries have no business to explore. And, it has one quality more than any religion in that it makes no difference between Gentile, Jew, or Christian. It is in this spirit that the Society has been established upon the footing of a Universal Brotherhood.

Unconcerned about politics; hostile to the insane dreams of Socialism and of Communism, which it abhors—as both are but disguised conspiracies of brutal force and sluggishness against honest labour; the Society cares but little about the outward human management of the material world. The whole of its aspirations are directed towards the occult truths of the visible and invisible worlds. Whether the physical man be under the rule of an empire or a republic, concerns

only the man of matter. His body may be enslaved; as to his Soul, he has the right to give to his rulers the proud answer of Socrates to his Judges. They have no sway over the *inner* man.

Such is, then, the Theosophical Society, and such its principles, its multifarious aims, and its objects. Need we wonder at the past misconceptions of the general public, and the easy hold the enemy has been able to find to lower it in the public estimation. The true student has ever been a recluse, a man of silence and meditation. With the busy world his habits and tastes are so little in common that, while he is studying, his enemies and slanderers have undisturbed opportunities. But time cures all and lies are but ephemera. Truth alone is eternal.

About a few of the Fellows of the Society who have made great scientific discoveries, and some others to whom the psychologist and the biologist are indebted for the new light thrown upon the darker problems of the inner man, we will speak later on. Our object now was but to prove to the reader that Theosophy is neither "a new fangled doctrine," a political cabal, nor one of those societies of enthusiasts which are born today but to die tomorrow. That not all of its members can think alike, is proved by the Society having organized into two great Divisions, — the Eastern and the Western — and the latter being divided into numerous sections, according to races and religious views. One man's thought, infinitely various as are its manifestations, is not all-embracing. Denied ubiquity, it must necessarily speculate but in one direction; and once transcending the boundaries of exact human knowledge, it has to err and wander, for the ramifications of the one Central and absolute Truth are infinite. Hence, we occasionally find even the greater philosophers losing themselves in the labyrinths of speculations, thereby provoking the criticism of posterity. But as all work for one and the same object, namely, the disenthralment of human thought, the elimination of superstitions, and the discovery of truth, all are equally welcome. The attainment of these objects, all agree, can best be secured by convincing the reason and warming the enthusiasm of the generation of fresh young minds, that are just ripening into maturity, and making ready to take the place of their prejudiced and conservative fathers. And, as each, — the great ones as well as small, — have trodden the royal road to knowledge, we listen to all, and take both small and great into our fellowship. For no honest searcher comes back empty-handed, and even he who has enjoyed the least share of popular favor can lay at least his mite upon the one altar of Truth.

SCIENCE AND THE SECRET DOCTRINE

ANUPADAKA

II

THE scientific problem of finding the true parentage of the earth is bound up in many complex ways with the intricate question of the constitution of matter in space, in the earth, and in the other planets and the sun. More than this, it involves the nature of life and consciousness itself, though this latter phase is hardly suspected by scientists.

There has been much speculation as to whether other "man-bearing" planets exist. The tidal and planetesimal theories, discussed in Part I, suggest that the origin of our earth resulted from an occurrence of a very rare order—the chance collision or near-collision of two stars. In this respect they place man in a position still more lonely and unique than that in which the nebular hypothesis left him; *e. g.*, although there might have been many nebular condensations, it has been surmised that, under the two latter theories, "life" probably does not exist anywhere outside the Solar System, thus making man a peculiarly insignificant case of a "skin disease of a ball of dirt." The conclusion is due not only to a "chance" explanation of the origin of the system, but also to the rigid idea of "life" as restricted to a narrow range of carbon compounds.

Though it is well recognized that all life on earth depends upon the sun in a definitely chemical way, there is not yet the slightest suspicion of our real relation with that pulsating center of vitality, or, through it, with our sister planets.

> *The real substance of the concealed (Sun) is a nucleus of Mother substance. It is the heart and the matrix of all the living and existing Forces in our solar universe. It is the Kernel from which proceed to spread on their cyclic journeys all the Powers that set in action the atoms in their functional duties, and the focus within which they again meet in their* SEVENTH ESSENCE *every eleventh year. . . .* (*The Secret Doctrine,* 1888, I, 290.)

> *"The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-center of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein. . . . The planets are its limbs and pulses. . . ."* (*Commentary, S. D.* I, 541.))

In other words, the Solar System is an organism in the truest sense, and one even more complex than the human body. Once any substantial proof of this comes to science, all ideas of its origin by such simple means as postulated by the tidal or planetesimal theories will be blown out of the scientific heavens on a gale of laughter. But how is this ever to come about? Only by the gradual spread of Theosophic influence through future decades, doubtless much assisted by the perplexities involved in material discoveries, which will probably increase even more rapidly than they have in the past.

For the present, however, any scientific investigation of the constitution of matter outside earth's atmosphere is attended with enormous difficulties. Some of these are indicated in the following passages from *The Secret Doctrine:*

> No *earths* or *moons* can be found—*except in appearance*—beyond, or of the same order of matter as found in our (solar) system. (I, 497.)
>
> Auguste Comte's pessimism with respect to the impossibility of knowing some day the chemical composition of the Sun, has not been belied thirty years later by Kirchoff, as claimed. The spectroscope has helped us to see that the elements, with which the modern chemist is familiar, *must in all probability* be present in the sun's outward robes—*not in the sun itself;* and, taking these "robes," the solar cosmic veil, for the sun itself, the physicists have declared its luminosity to be due to *combustion* and *flame,* and have mistaken the vital principle of that luminary for a purely *material* thing, and called it "chromosphere." (I, 528.)
>
> *"The essence of cometary matter and of that which composes the stars is totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which Western Science is now acquainted.* While the spectroscope has shown the probable similarity (owing *to the chemical action of terrestrial light* upon the intercepted rays) of earthly and sidereal substance, the chemical actions, peculiar to the variously progressed orbs of space, have not been detected, nor proven to be identical with those observed on our own planet"—say the Teachers. Mr. Crookes says almost the same in the fragment quoted from his lecture, *"Elements and Meta-Elements."* (I, 597.)

This deceptive veiling effect became a matter of primary scientific concern during 1934-35. Profs. Stebbins and Huffer found evidence of a scattered layer of "dust particles" in the Milky Way which had previously caused astronomers to consider the stars about twice as far away as they really are (since such measurements are made with light).[1] Prof. Erich Regener[2] found the ozone layer in our atmosphere—now a commonplace in astronomy—which cuts off all ultra-

[1] *Science,* Oct. 4, 1934.

[2] *Science,* Oct. 19, 1934.

violet waves below a certain length (and what else?). This effect is vitally important, for life on earth could not be pursued in its present manner if these rays were allowed to come through.

Dr. Henry Norris Russell has listed some of the difficulties encountered in trying to study the atmospheres of the planets.[3] One of these is the obstruction of the ozone layer mentioned above. Another is the blocking of rays at the opposite end of the spectrum by water vapor. The range thus lost is small, but falls exactly in the wrong place. (Incidentally, Dr. Russell remarks in the same article that no really satisfactory theory of the origin of planets had yet been offered.) According to the *Literary Digest*,[4] some five years ago large-scale experiments were being devised to try to solve the problem of what really happens to light in the earth's atmosphere. A curious biological connection with this research appears in the findings of Drs. Bunker and Harris.[5] They believe that most of the light which is medically valuable has to be of artificial origin because these wave-lengths are sifted out of the solar rays by our atmosphere. From which arise several questions: since the higher the altitude, the more of beneficent sunlight, is there here an explanation of the fact that the traditional habitat of true occultists is always in regions of great elevation—such as Tibet, the highest community of size on the earth? Is the earth's atmosphere generally denser in this literally "dark cycle" than at other times? And what is the Karma of the increased densification and pollution of the air around industrial cities?

The first use we have noted of the term "forbidden light" (now more generally "forbidden radiation") appeared in *Science News Letter* for Aug. 3, 1935, where Dr. I. S. Bowen discussed indirect ways of studying the real nature of light from the stars— *i. e.*, as it exists before entering our atmosphere. In 1934, Dr. Paul W. Merrill thought that we would not know the true nature of stellar radiation unless we could establish an observatory far beyond the atmosphere, say, on the moon. (It may be suspected, in view of the peculiar *occult* relation between earth and moon, that one would have to go farther than that!)

No doubt many new scientific discoveries are on the way, which *indirectly* will clarify these problems a little. Yet what could astronomy learn from the fact that, out in space, spectroscopic analysis of starlight would show many lines corresponding to no known element on the earth? What could it guess of the nature of those elements, and their relation to *life?*

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[3] *Science*, Jan. 4, 1935. [4] Dec. 21, 1935. [5] *Science*, Aug. 2, 1935.

The situation must indeed remain *hazy* until true occult learning, which makes use of more effective means, comes into its own. But science has achieved a new eminence, a new step in real progress, in the recognition and admission of its own ignorance. From this much may follow.

Meantime, lest the relations between science and Theosophy become too amiable to be interesting, let us close with a note particularly annoying to astronomers. In *Science* for Dec. 27, 1940, recounting the notable events of the year past, is the sentence: "The five naked-eye planets, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, were lined up in the Western sky in a strange formation." On page 30, Vol. II, of *The Secret Doctrine* is the sentence:

> Venus is the most occult, powerful, and mysterious of all the planets; the one whose influence upon, and relation to the Earth is most prominent.

And on p. 656, Vol. I, is the following:

> Thus what Kepler said, as a great astronomer, becomes comprehensible. He recognized the grand and universal importance of all such planetary conjunctions, "each of which"—as he has well said, — "is a *climacteric* year of Humanity." The rare conjunction of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars has its significance and importance on account of its *certain great results*—in India and China as much as it has in Europe for the respective mystics of all those countries. . . . The reader has to bear in mind that the phrase "climacteric year" has more than the usual significance, when used by Occultists and Mystics. It is not only a critical period, during which some great change is periodically expected, whether in human or cosmic constitution, but it likewise pertains to spiritual universal changes.

The "great changes" for Europe and China are evident enough; India—waits. How long, and for what, who can say?

The Ancestor of Science

When Theosophy and its principles are once known, it will be demonstrated that our philosophy is not only "a near relation of modern science," but its ancestor, and far surpassing it in logic; that its "metaphysics" is much broader, more beautiful, more powerful than all others emanating from a dogmatic cult, for it is the metaphysics of Nature in her chaste nudity, physical, moral and spiritual, the only one capable of explaining apparent miracles by natural and psychic laws, of completing the ideas purely physiological and pathological of Science, and of killing forever the anthropomorphic Gods and Devils of the dualist religions. No one, more than Theosophists, believes surely in the Unity of Eternal Law.—From *Le Lotus.*

YOUTH-COMPANIONS' FORUM

IT is said that "behind will stands desire." If this is true, how can we ever be free of desire?

(*a*) In the Preface to *The Ocean of Theosophy,* Mr. Judge calls will a colorless force everywhere present in the universe. As this is a universe of Life and being, it is only through the actions of beings that Will comes into play, because forces do not exist of themselves. So there must be beings who give direction to the will.

What is it that determines our actions, the intention of our will? Is it desires which are personal, or is our *desire* the same as the motive that started Buddha and Jesus upon the Path of Service. It is stated in *The Ocean of Theosophy* that "Even a Buddha or a Jesus had first to make a vow, which is a desire, in some life, that he would save the world or some part of it, and to persevere with the desire alive in his heart through countless lives." In this way, the will is consciously used, and is known as the Spiritual Will. Because then the whole focus of the spiritual nature is brought into every action, this spiritual will flies like light and cuts all obstacles like a sharp sword. Only a universal Desire can stand behind the universal will.

(*b*) The word desire is used to cover a wide range of feelings. It may be the lower personal, emotional tendency, based on selfish thought, or it may be an all-embracing desire to help others, an earnest purpose, a vow to work for the good of all that lives.

In speaking of the destructive qualities of the desires of lower nature, *The Friendly Philosopher* says:

> With many conflicting desires, then, we live upon each other, we prey upon each other, we devour each other, we injure each other—in every way. There is no necessity for all this. It never was the original plan—the original nature of the development of man. There is never any need to desire. All our woes are self-inflicted; the very inherent power of spirit has plunged us into them and maintains us in them.

Our desires are represented by the ideas and ideals which we hold; our choices, motivations, are made accordingly. Our *attitude* decides which way the will must flow, for the will, like unharnessed electricity, is a free power, shaped by our thoughts. The desire to live might be called the will to live; the desire to know might be called the will to know. We are never free from some ruling motive or direction of thought, but we can and must free ourselves from being dominated by liking or disliking, from wishing or longing for benefits for ourselves, free from desire to preserve present possessions.

So striving, eventually we shall arrive at cessation of desire for personal advancement. The ceaseless Desire in all Nature to "live" becomes in Man the desire to "know," the *conscious* expression of Will.

We become free by making ourselves the master. Plato likened uncontrolled desires to horses running away with the chariot. Man needs to control, to use each principle for its natural purpose. Thus the will is gradually freed from the domination of desire and at last subdues the mind itself, but before this domination is perfected the will acts according to desire. We achieve the victory by raising the desire; that is, by wanting ever higher things. The good man who becomes a sage had at one time to arouse the desire for the company of holy men and to keep his desire for progress alive through many lives.

In the highest sense, desire and will are one. The *Glossary* says: "Kama is the first conscious, all-embracing desire for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative One Force, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray of the Absolute." We are that One Force. Our first desire was for the general welfare. Only as we materialized the great ideals into cut and dried dogmas did Kama become the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane. A vow is the expression of the desire for the welfare of all, and leads to recovery of our original knowledge and purity of purpose.

If harmony is the law of Nature, according to Theosophy, why is there so much suffering among the lower kingdoms, in which one species preys upon another?

The destruction of forms is a necessary process in the economy of nature, and is not accompanied by suffering as man knows suffering. Every breath we take destroys countless invisible forms. The plant breaks up mineral forms and the life there imprisoned is released to higher forms, which we call vegetable life. As *The Secret Doctrine* says:

> The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards *a higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which ensure the "survival of the fittest," though so cruel in their immediate action—all are working toward the grand end (I, 277).

We must see in nature's apparently ruthless destruction the divine law of sacrifice and interdependence working throughout for the

good of all. The bud that does not blossom may be restrained from doing so for the good of the plant as a whole. We have often seen a gardener cut back shrubs and young trees to but two or three branches. This is done to concentrate the food supply offered by the roots where it is most needed; yet to the uninitiated he appears a rather cruel man to carve the poor tree so. He is but aiding nature's economy.

When an animal is injured, pain is caused in the animal form, but the animal does not hold the idea of pain in a mind as man does, so it disappears more quickly. The animal does not wonder, "How seriously am I hurt?" It does not think about it at all as only a mind-being can think. The pain is an automatic psychic reaction. A wave of suffering is sent out as along a wire and it must continue until it comes to a center which can readjust it, and such a center is found only in man, a self-conscious being. This helps to explain what must happen in cases of vivisection. Some vivisectors are honest in their belief in the necessity of vivisection, but some are ruthless and careless. Obviously, the "wrong-minded" ones are making permanent moral wounds in themselves. The law of harmony is the law of divine economy.

Nature—Higher and Lower

The nature or principle of matter is exclusion; each body excludes all others and is impenetrable. Spiritual being is inclusive, and each soul lives its true life only in communion with others; each avails itself of the experience of all others; each lives the life of all. The truth and goodness discovered by another can be made mine by my self-active participation in it. Spiritual participation does not divide and diminish, but increases rather. My truth grows in me when I impart it to others. Material participation diminishes; the barrel of meal or the cruse of oil if consumed by one can not be consumed by another. This confusion between spiritual and material laws which we find in the school of writers that demand freedom from external authority, explains the mixture of good and bad, wise and unwise prescriptions which we find side by side in their books.

—William T. Harris.

CALENDARS AND CYCLES

QUESTION: "What is the significance of Mr. Judge's reference to the 'Metonic cycle' and the 'cycle of the sun' in Chapter XIV of *The Ocean of Theosophy?*"

The chapter mentioned is the one devoted to cycles in general in the light of theosophical teachings, and in particular to some of the more important astronomical, civil, and religious cycles, as known to and made use of by our humanity in the past and in the present. Among these are named the two inquired about. One and all, these many cycles themselves represent departures from or return toward their common point, psychological as well as physical.

Mr. Judge's reference is in the form of a quotation, and reads:

> "The Metonic cycle is that of the Moon. It is a period of about nineteen years, which being completed the new and the full moons return on the same days of the month."
>
> "The cycle of the sun is a period of twenty-eight years, which having elapsed the Dominical or Sunday letters return to their former place and proceed in the former order according to the Julian calendar."

These cycles are the original pagan sources of the presently prevailing calendar in almost universal civil use. They are equally the originals of the ecclesiastical calendars employed by the Christian Church and churches in connection with their religious sacred days and festivals, both fixed and "movable."

Meton was an Athenian astronomer of the 5th century B. C. He is credited with being the first European to observe and record with an approach to accuracy the respective cycles of the moon and of the sun from a fixed point of measurement. He determined the lunar cycle as approximately 29½ days, the solar as approximately 365¼ days, after which each cycle would repeat in the same order.

This was important for the reason of religious rites connected with the new and the full moon; and similarly, sacred ceremonies concerned with the solstices and equinoxes. But other religious or magical rites were consecrated to those periods when the two chief phases of the moon most nearly coincided with the winter solstice and the vernal equinox. Hence the great importance of determining the conjunctions and oppositions of sun, moon, and earth: a combined luni-solar cycle.

Once the actual lengths of the two separate cycles were found, it was a simple arithmetical problem to figure their least common multiple, which "is a period of about nineteen years," and this is the

"Metonic cycle," named for its discoverer. It is now known, however, that both this and the "cycle of the sun" were anciently employed in the Orient.

Prior to Meton's time the Greeks used an inaccurate calendar, corrected more or less at haphazard by the insertion of extra or intercalary days to bring it nearer to accord with the astronomical cycles. Meton remedied this by constructing a calendar with fixed periodic intercalations. The particular years to which these adjustments were applied were called embolismic.

His calendar soon became standard throughout the Grecian world. For the information of the public the agora and the temple in the various Greek states and cities were provided with marble tablets on which were engraved in letters of gold the nineteen years of the Metonic cycle in serial order. They were therefore called the "Golden Numbers."

The early Roman calendar was in still worse confusion and disorder. By the time of Julius Caesar its reckoning was a whole season in arrears of the true astronomical solar cycle. Caesar engaged Sosigenes, a Chaldeo-Alexandrian astronomer, to arrange a new calendar for civil use only, based on the solar cycle. This was made public in 46 B. C., and has since been known as the Julian calendar. Its use rapidly extended through the vast domains of the Roman world.

The continuing expansion of Roman conquests brought into subjection many tribes and peoples, each with its own calendar for ordinary and for religious use. Almost coincident with the Julian calendar the astrological cycle we call the week became current as a ready and convenient division of time. From this arose the problem of finding a common cycle for the days of the week and the days of the solar year, when both would repeat from their point of conjunction.

The Julian calendar had not only corrected the old Roman, but had also introduced a better system of intercalation than that of Meton. Sosigenes gave a fixed number of days to each month of the Julian year, and provided for the necessary intercalation to take care of the fractional quarter of a day in the solar year. The regular year was established at 365 days, but "each year in four" an extra day was inserted in the month of February, giving it 29 days instead of 28, and that year 366 instead of 365 days.

As 7, the number of days in the week, and 365, the number of days in the year, are prime to each other, and as a lunar year, 52 weeks, amounts to but 364 days, it follows that this difference of one day in the two differently based years would be run through in 7 years,

when both the day of the week and that of the year would once more return to their common point of coincidence and repetition. It is equally clear, however, that the Julian "leap-year" intercalation would upset this conjunction by the additional day in each 4 years. Hence the actual cycle of concurrence of the weekly calendar and the Julian solar calendar would be 4×7, or 28 years. This is "the cycle of the sun." By means of this cycle both the day of the week and that of the year could be easily ascertained.

To avoid the confusion incident to giving serial numbers to the days of the week as well as to the Metonic cycle, the first seven letters of the Roman alphabet were assigned to the days of the week, beginning with our present Sunday, the Christian sacred day. Hence the expression "the Dominical or Sunday letters." It follows that the week-day of January 1st, the beginning of the Julian and our New Year's, being known by its appropriate letter-number instead of by name, then the following Sunday and Sundays throughout the year could be calculated, just as in our present convenient yearly calendars, which show the days of the week, of the month, and often of other cycles, at a mere glance. All this, be it noted, "according to the *Julian* calendar," the parent of our present one, as the Julian was the child of the Metonic.

It should be observed that both the Metonic and the Julian calendars numbered the days of the year as well as those of the month. We are accustomed to reckon only the day of the week and of the month in any particular year. We speak of the "first," the "second," etc., day whether of the week or the month, never thinking that each year has its days numbered from 1 to 365 or 366, as the case may be. It is interesting to note that the ancient Mayan calendars, so far as now deciphered, indicate one which included their day, their month, their year, their great cycle, all in a single index—as we might say: Sunday, March 2, year-day 61, *Anno Domini* 1941, *Anno Mundi* 5945, according to our present "Christian" calendar.

The rediscovery of portions of the significance of the Mayan religious calendar just mentioned, through the labors of de Bourbourg, Le Plongeon and others, might be emulated by theosophical students in endeavoring to gain more than a chronological meaning from the Brahmanical calendar reproduced in the same chapter of the *Ocean*. But this is an aside.

Returning to the direct subject: The cycles in question govern the Christian Sabbath, the Sunday or "Lord's day," the holiest of Christian festivals, Easter, commemorating the Resurrection of Christ, and the Christian Christmas, celebrated as his birth-date,

but also applying to him as an actual Savior, Messiah, Redeemer—an Avatar whose Incarnation, mission, message, crucifixion and "rising from the dead" all represent and symbolize the repetition of "that which had been before." All have been anticipated countless times in the past, and will be repeated countless times in the future—for Man the microcosm, and the Universe, the macrocosm, "never were not, and never hereafter will they cease to be." Nature and Man, being Life itself in one or another state and condition, are "ever-becoming" in a never-ending spiral of cyclic progression.

Both prior and subsequent to the present calendar, Christians themselves held many views in regard to Christ and his nature, and to the various festivals and consecrated rites and dates now presumed or claimed to be canonical. But this is a matter of such complexity that it may well be dealt with separately.

The Theosophical Endeavor

H. P. B. and her teachers declared in 1875 that the age, in the West, was about to swing back from a materialism "which enthroned scepticism while it destroyed spirituality," and an effort had to be made to furnish the only philosophy which would prevent a return to dogmatism or superstition by giving a rational explanation to the race mind now about to put questions that science is yet unable to answer and the churches had never pretended needed any reply save a reference to the mercy or the favor of God. This satisfying system of philosophy was once more brought out from its place of preservation, and today it brings comfort to many who without it would be forced to blaspheme against nature. Nothing but the influence of these doctrines could have raised up on every hand men and women who without money or hope of fame work on for the real man who is mind and not body. The sphere of influence of the Society is, then, not so much in works of a material character, where physical wants are supplied for the moment and the real man left to his own devices for the perpetuation of a civilization that breeds poverty and a criminal class, but is in the field of man's real nature, which lasts through crash of civilization or cataclysm of nature. Its depth therefore is measurable only by a plummet which touches the depths beyond today. It will be known in its entirety when the present centre of eternity shall have moved itself into the far-distant future and become a new present, a glorious reincarnation.

—William Q. Judge.

CHRISTIANS OF THE MODERN WORLD

THE Theosophist who is also a student of cultural development will have noted the successive steps by which modern science is gradually approaching the teachings and perspective of Theosophy, and, because the assumptions of contemporary thought are predominantly "scientific" in character, it is quite natural that indications of progress should be sought chiefly in this direction. However, there are signs that the modern theologian as well as the devotee to "scientism" may play a significant part in effecting the transition from authoritarianism and dogma to self-knowledge. A trend for the better may be discerned in the writings of many sincere Christians who profess allegiance to their church, not because they are oblivious to its faults, but in spite of them, and because the materialism of philosophy and education drives them to other fields of endeavor. Genuine humanitarians have embraced the church when conventional religion seemed the only alternative to atheism and skepticism. H. P. Blavatsky carefully prefaced her attack on "Churchianity" in the second volume of *Isis Unveiled* by these words:

> Were it possible, we would keep this work out of the hands of many Christians whom its perusal would not benefit, and for whom it was not written. We allude to those whose faith in their respective churches is pure and sincere, and those whose sinless lives reflect the glorious example of that Prophet of Nazareth, by whose mouth the spirit of truth spake loudly to humanity. Such there have been at all times. History preserves the names of many as heroes, philosophers, philanthropists, martyrs, and holy men and women; but how many more have lived and died, unknown but to their intimate acquaintance, unblessed but by their humble beneficiaries! These have ennobled Christianity, but would have shed the same lustre upon any other faith they might have professed—for they were higher than their creed.
>
> An analysis of religious beliefs in general, this volume is in particular directed against theological Christianity, the chief opponent of free thought. It contains not one word against the pure teachings of Jesus, but unsparingly denounces their debasement into pernicious ecclesiastical systems that are ruinous to man's faith in his immortality and his God, and subversive of all moral restraint.

The position taken by modern liberal Christians presents a problem for application of Theosophical philosophy. The wise man can never give wholesale approval or condemnation of social or religious phenomena; he sees in each situation only the need of understanding, and by understanding Christianity he obtains the real key to the

moral contradictions in Western Civilization. When the sage known as H. P. Blavatsky sought to destroy the mind-killing dogmas of religion, there was no enmity in her heart towards the theologians and church officials who had helped to perpetuate the intellectual slavery of medieval Christianity. Guarding, perhaps, against the sweeping condemnations often made by ignorant enthusiasts, she stated that "some of the early Popes were initiates." There was no personal hate in her being, but only the wider and deeper understanding of man and his destiny that distinguishes the wise from mortal man. H. P. Blavatsky, while engaged in a death-struggle with "Jesuitism," took special pains to draw the attention of students to the nobility of many earnest Christians. She spoke of Father Damien as a *"true Theosophist,"* and pointed out that the masses of blind believers in the church were not without those who worked for the benefit of mankind. In one of her *Lucifer* editorials, she wrote:

> "The fault I find with the Theosophical Society," said one of the most eminent surgeons in London to one of the editors, quite recently, "is that I cannot discover that any of its members really lead the Christ-life." This seemed a very serious accusation from a man who is not only in the front rank of his profession, and valued for his kindly nature, by his patients, and by society, and well-known as a quiet doer of many good deeds. The only possible answer to be made was that the Christ-life is undeniably the ideal of every one worthy in any sense of the name of a Theosophist, and that if it is not lived it is because there are none strong enough to carry it out.

One who looks closely will see that H. P. B. was no mere yeoman in the iconoclastic army of reaction against religion; she directed efforts along the only channels which could lead to permanent victory over the subtle blandishments of religious psychism that seemed to make individual thinking unnecessary. The growth of scientific inquiry is generally thought to be the nemesis of Catholic and Protestant dogmas alike, but science and modern social movements, great though their present force, are and ever will be inadequate in destroying religious authoritarianism. Science ignores the questions about which human beings wish most to know—those concerning the soul and a possible after-life. Given no answer, the great masses will turn back to emotional and supernatural religions unless new food for the higher mind is offered.

Twin dangers await the deluded masses, who ever seek new revelations when the old become elusive. On one hand beckons the growing fascination of psychic phenomena and spiritualism; and on the other awaits the centralized and tenacious power of the Roman Church. Stanley High, in a recent *Readers' Digest* article, tells of the current

success of Catholic proselyting in certain localities in the United States. The worldly prestige of Catholicism is almost daily augmented by influential converts who seek the artificial certainty of dogma.

Christianity is "all things to all men," and each minister, theologian and church-goer must be considered as an individual equation. True Theosphists do not judge the motive of a divinity student or devoted church follower. Many seek the religion of the day because the highest ideals they know are associated in their minds with the word, "God." Others devise a personal philosophy of altruism based on precepts of Jesus and their own interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the Bible. There must be "theosophists unaware" within the fold of Christianity who would lead "Christian" minds to the intellectual discipline of philosophy and the inspiration of a truer religion, if they knew how, or had the means.

As an illustration of the possibilities in this direction, two paragraphs from A. E. Morgan's remarkable little book, *The Long Road,** may be quoted. One illustrates the failure, the other the success, of a Christian to fulfill his highest responsibility:

> It is necessary that the mind be open and receptive to new truth. As a young man I knew a minister of great sincerity and energy. He lived by his convictions and with vigor gave his whole life to the general good. A considerable number of young men and women gathered around him and began to catch his spirit of willingness to pay any price for his convictions. Then the temper of scientific inquiry began to penetrate that group, and questions arose as to whether sincere purpose must necessarily be associated with the theological doctrines of a sectarian creed. In the minister's mind this questioning was evil. He opposed such inquiry and within a few years this group of young people had dispersed, most of them feeling that sincerity of purpose and narrowness of belief were necessarily associated and must be held or abandoned together. In his later years this minister worked chiefly with people to whom serious intellectual doubts did not come. He was potentially a man of far-reaching influence, but he could not break his shell.
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> A country pastor in the Swiss highlands outgrew the conventional bounds of his work. During a quarter of a century he has been a medium of culture among a hard-working rural people. Today, through his influence, partly by his violin, people of a dozen villages

* In this work Mr. Morgan sets down in practical terms his life-long dream for the regeneration of modern society. The key to his plan—which is not a "plan" but a moral attitude—may be found in the phrase, "Islands of Brotherhood," meaning nuclei of working altruists who seek to guide their lives by the spirit of true fraternity. Theosophists will find a careful study of *The Long Road* fully repaid in inspiration and encouragement. It may be purchased direct from The National Home Library Foundation at Washington, D. C., at the small price of 25 cents.

are acquainted with the world's great music. In their thinking they have reached beyond the church authorities and get inspiration from Gandhi, Buddha, Plato, and Lao-tse. His familiar talks have made the country people world-minded and universal-minded. Their hard poverty of mountain life has been relieved by handicrafts for winter evenings, introduced by this man and his wife. There have been improvements in home building, in farming methods. Young men and women have been helped to find significant careers. His physical limitations are very marked, but he has measured his strength and lives within its limits. Sometimes he has quit work and remained quiet for considerable periods. Without an auto, and with a weak heart that prevents him from riding a bicycle on the hills, this man still walks the miles of roads about his parish—a bringer of good will and of civilization.

Among Christian ministers who are giving modern thought a constructive bent are such men as John Haynes Holmes and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Reinhold Niebuhr, professor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary, should also be mentioned, particularly for the influence of his excellent book, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. The weekly *Christian Century,* said to be read by a quarter of all the Christian ministers in America, has begun to constitute itself a positive moral force in the present crisis, championing freedom of thought and conscience. Its editorial comments have lately defended the cause of the *non-denominational* conscientious objector to preparation for killing through military training, at the same time vigorously objecting to legislation which automatically exempts ministers and divinity students from the draft. The editors see no social value in treating clergymen as a privileged "caste," and much that is undemocratic in this action.

Nor is the *Christian Century* alone in its stand. A number of divinity students of the Union Theological Seminary last year resigned from their studies so that they might make their protest against war more than an empty gesture. They resolved to face the issue as *citizens,* instead of as exempted clergymen. Men such as these, willing to sacrifice for principle, are the stuff from which theosophists are made. Regardless of whether or not their convictions are the same as our own, the example set may play its part in strengthening the moral fiber of the American nation.

Paralleling such practical efforts are the new interpretations of the gospels and the mission of Jesus provided by prominent Christian scholars. To select but one from many modern works of this character, in *Is God Emeritus?* by Dr. Shailer Mathews, Dean Emeritus of the Chicago Divinity School, theosophists will discover an approach, striking in some respects, to Theosophical philosophy. Dr.

Mathews is author of *The Spiritual Interpretation of History* and other thoughtful books calling for re-interpretation of Christianity.

Dr. Mathews contends against anthropomorphism and sees clearly the lack of moral responsibility which characterized the old Christianity; he rightly blames the Church itself for the extreme materialism of scientific thinking, which arose in self-defense against the constant opposition and intolerance of religious orthodoxy. Fundamental postulates of Dr. Mathew's own faith are: (1) "*God*," as symbol of the unity in essence and the interdependence in action of all beings; "whether or not one uses the term, God, is no test of his religious life." (2) *Law,* as the natural activity of a universe pervaded by Deity. (3) *Growth,* or Evolution, as an objective to supplant the static Christian conception of heaven and hell.

> From this point of view [he writes] immortality becomes something more than wishful thinking. . . . Death is an episode, not an end. We can abandon pictures of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, . . . An individual person whose center of life is beyond the control of the animal survivals and who is at one with the personality-producing activities of the cosmos may expect some new and less animal mode of life as the next step in evolution.

This book is not unique, but typical of the most constructive movement yet inaugurated in the name of Christianity. These truly liberal writers regard the Christian religion as primarily a social manifestation of the search for religious truth; they have discarded dogma for tolerance and good will. Theosophists have reason to regret Dr. Mathews' unwillingness to do away with the word, "God," but they should also recognize that he has given the term a new definition—"a symbol of the interrelationship of beings and their spiritual interdependence." This is a fundamental step in the right direction. Certainly the transition from pseudo-religion and pseudo-science must be aided by reformation and change from within.

There is much in the present scene to encourage working Theosophists. The old materialism of science and religion is gradually losing its hold upon the race-mind. The field of scientific enquiry, wherein the recent confirmations of Theosophical teachings concerning the astral body indicate an approach to occult teaching, and the field of liberal Christianity, striving continually to replace dogma with logic, metaphysics and philosophy, both indicate hope for a final convergence in true scientific religion before the end of the twenty-first century.

ON THE LOOKOUT

"The State of the Nation"

Readers of American journals of opinion have for the past year been witnessing the dawn of a cycle of honest self-questioning on the part of the intellectual leaders of the nation. It entered the zone of popular discussion about last May when Archibald MacLeish, poet, and Librarian of Congress, denounced the defeatist fiction of the post-war period in an address before an educational group, and published in the *Nation* (May 18) his much-debated article, "The Irresponsibles," which was an attack on the modern scholar. (Excerpts from this article were printed in Theosophy for July, 1940.) Mr. MacLeish charged the novelists with undermining American morale by spreading disillusionment and pacifism (of which he strongly disapproves), and accused the scholar of cloistered abstraction from the world and its woes. Of the latter he wrote:

> The irresponsibility of the scholar is the irresponsibility of the scientist upon whose laboratory insulation he has patterned all his work. The scholar in letters has made himself as indifferent to values, as careless of significance, as bored with meanings as the chemist. He is a refugee from consequences, an exile from the responsibility of moral choice. . . . It is not for nothing that the modern scholar invented the Ph.D. thesis as his principal contribution to literary form. The Ph.D. thesis is the perfect image of his world. It is work done for the sake of doing work—perfectly conscientious, perfectly laborious, perfectly irresponsible.

Thought Without Action

The writer and the artist are with the scholar held equally guilty of social apathy. They see the world "without morality, without care, without judgment"; they have "freed themselves of the personal responsibility associated with personal choice." The indictment is true enough, and it is a hopeful sign that a number of scholars, called upon to comment, admitted that their calling has become largely a "faith without works." This separation of knowledge from life is a sanctified western tradition which renders learning effete and leaves men of action devoid of guidance. "Without devotion," W. Q. Judge wrote, "a vast confusion arises." With but few exceptions, our scholars have been without devotion, and the confusion has arrived. Thought without action, ethics without philanthropy, profession without practice—these are among the Karmic causes of the insanity which has finally overtaken western civilization. Mr. Mac-

Leish, like Thomas Mann, believes that the intellectuals have failed by neglecting the sphere of *political* action, but the failure is much more deep-seated than this.

"Cult of Comfort"

Last September, introducing Roy Helton's article, "The Inner Threat: Our Own Softness," the editors of *Harper's* suggested that the MacLeish statement may have acted as "a catalyst in the minds of other intellectuals." Articles on the same general theme, all by writers of reputation, began to flood the *Harper's* office. The editors chose to publish Mr. Helton's excoriation of our "cult of comfort." Less intellectual in tone than Mr. MacLeish, but with as much or more pertinence for the common man, he condemns the "effeminacy" of modern life in America. For the pioneer spirit and surge of constructive effort typifying the nineteenth century we have substituted the goal of a twentieth century Sybaris—"turned from idealizing the creation of a mechanical paradise to the wholly feminine dream of security for our domestic comforts." Children are uniformly the victims of parental indulgence, growing up without the fibers of character produced by hard work and discipline. (Will Durant, quoted in Lookout for March, developed the same theme.) Modern engineering genius is consecrated to the gadget, the labor-saving device, and various instruments of ease and pleasure. "For the past twenty years," says Mr. Helton, "American civilization as represented by its great middle class has appeared to pursue no ideal more world-shaking than the attempt to get harder and harder butter on softer and softer bread." Democracy, he feels, cannot survive the degradation of its processes for such petty ends.

> . . . to say that we are gathering our forces in the defense of freedom is not enough. *It is what freedom is used for that must give us all the strength we can ever have.* (Our italics.) If we need our freedom to save our pet luxuries, to indulge our children, to invent social or economic devices by which we can evade the task of finding work for all men and women, then there is no health in us and democracy will pass into the historic record as another noble experiment defeated by the indulgences of men.

Philosophy and Conduct

But discipline, as Dr. Carrel observed recently, "must be powered by aspiration, by a motivating philosophy." Mr. Helton offers no central truth that can bring our scattered energies to constructive focus. It will not do to repeat either the old libertarian slogans or the allegories of traditional religion. These have lost their power.

Empirical Rationalism—The Modern Religion

Waldo Frank, commenting in the *Nation* (June 1, 1940) on the MacLeish article, pursues the diagnosis further. The poet had compared the sensitive social conscience of Voltaire with the *laissez faire* spirit of today's learned men, but Mr. Frank sees that Voltaire, with all his ardor and humanitarianism, was nevertheless "one of the progenitors of *our* chaos." MacLeish, he points out, would have avoided much confusion if he had asked: "What is *our* culture? Have our writers and their public an *implicit* religion?" Mr. Frank thinks that the scientific faith in "empirical rationalism" amounts to a religion, but a false one. It is "the suicidal doctrine that material forces are the sole history makers." "We must," he says, "study the sources and dynamics of our values." We must correct the tragic error of mistaking a part of reality for the whole, and acting on that basis. Our intellectuals, the "writing men," have had a theory of life which "does not touch the quick and deep of experience, and thereby leaves the fertilizing fields of action to the anti-poets, the anti-philosophers and the anti-persons." That is why the "antis" have been able to lead the masses to a crusade of destruction.

"Men of the Terror"

These "enemies" of civilized man, the destroyers who make Hate the spring of action for accomplishing their end, are no extra-cosmic invaders of our society; they are rather our own creation—sprung from modern social life. "In this foul soil," H. P. Blavatsky wrote in "The Fall of Ideals," "sprouted the germs which ultimately developed into All-denying protestators, Atheists, Nihilists, and Anarchists, men of the Terror." And, she adds, before the incarnate Protest of this embittered portion of humanity "repents and re-unites with his fellow men in one common Brotherhood, all *cause* for protest must have disappeared from earth." The bitter truth is that "Freedom, or Liberty, is but a vain word just now all over the civilized globe, freedom is but a cunning synonym for oppression of the people in the name of the people, and it exists for castes, never for units."

"An American Inventory"

In a later issue of the *Nation* (Aug. 31, 1940), Mr. Frank blazes forth on his own account. He starts out:

> The youth of America, in so far as it is aware of anything, smolders in a sullen quandary. It has received from us a schizoid world of rococo phrases and bloody facts. . . . Education by radio, newspaper,

> movies, joy ride, and advertisement has made them spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, the worst-equipped of generations. . . . They see the result of 150 years of social thought and labor action: failure to solve even the simplest mechancal problems of security, of distribution—not to mention those of the good life.

Mr. Frank is justly contemptuous of our "duco-finish culture." Publicists use big words—"justice, free speech"—and "the 90 per cent of the U. S. A. who have never seen *Fortune* and cannot afford *Life* hear the golden phrases from a distance." He fears the success of "efficiency," as the ideal "which will be felt by more and more of our people to be a logical conclusion of our reigning values."

> Nor will the propaganda of success fail to win millions of our uneasy young men and women who have been trained to seek the easy short-cuts to comfort, who have been instructed by school and life neither to think nor to feel deeply, whose intuitions and sensibilities are starved, and who have lost the vital discipline, the sense of sacrifice and destiny, which alone give organic meaning to our heritage and freedom.

Fruits of Materialism

Last June President Hutchins of the University of Chicago gave emphasis to this tragedy in education. Speaking on "Preparedness," he said:

> In order to believe in democracy we must believe that there is a difference between truth and falsity, good and bad, right and wrong, and that truth, goodness and right are objective standards even though they cannot be experimentally verified. . . . Are we prepared to defend these principles? Of course not. For forty years and more our intellectual leaders have been telling us they are not true. . . . If everything is a matter of opinion, force becomes the only way of settling differences of opinion. And, of course, if success is the test of rightness, right is on the side of the heavier battalions.

The Summum Bonum—"Quick Cash Return"

This is the outcome of indoctrination in what Mortimer Adler calls "scientism" and "positivism," and Mr. Frank, the religion of "empirical rationalism." H. P. Blavatsky named it simply Materialism. In his article, "This Pre-War Generation," published by *Harper's* last October, Mr. Adler sums up its catastrophic effects:

> The real trouble is that our college students and recent graduates do not take *any* moral issues seriously, whether about their personal or the economic and political affairs of the nation. Their only principle is that there are no moral principles at all, their only slogan that all statements of policy, all appeals to standards, are nothing

> but slogans, and hence frauds and deceptions. . . . Such skepticism leads naturally to *real-politik:* in the game of power politics—and there is no other—only force and propaganda count. . . .
>
> They [the students] have no sales resistance against the appeal of promises to gain for them everything the animal wants. They will even have "faith" in democracy if such promises can be made in its name. . . . Let America cease to be the land of opportunity for individual success, let another and much worse depression increase the number of hopelessly insecure, and our young men may find a leader who can change their "faith." They are democrats now only by feeling and opinion. Feelings and opinions are easily changed by force of circumstances and by rhetoric. . . . Instead of trying to make democracy work because they *rationally know* it is right, they will give it up for something else which, at the time, offers a quicker cash return. Mr. MacLeish diagnosed the disease correctly but he failed to trace its causes to their roots.

The Failure of Liberal Thought

These are the symptoms of a "world revolution," to use Waldo Frank's description—a revolution *"downward,"* and *"until a new force transfigures it, it will continue to be a revolution downward."* Mr. Frank explains:

> It is a revolution downward because the entire proud modern period has been a period of transition which failed to generate the valid ethos with which man could go *forward* into the mature world of integrated industrial democracy that the machine and our tradition of man's high destiny make compulsory. This is a revolution of inertia, of reaction, because these are the sole alternatives to what 150 years of liberal and radical thought have not effected: a program for the organic revolution to maturity. The problem is how to *revolutionize the revolution.*

To "Impose" Liberty

Mr. Frank attempts a solution to this problem in his recent book, *Chart for Rough Water.* Another work written with similar aims, Lewis Mumford's *Faith for Living,* is reviewed by Malcolm Cowley in the *New Republic* for Sept. 9, 1940. Mr. Mumford contends that economics and politics are "mere superstructures"; that the real foundation of society lies in moral values—forgotten or perverted by the democracies. He hopes for a great conversion of the people—a psychic mutation born from world crisis—to an idealistic religion of liberalism, unconfined by any Church, "deep-seated, organic, religious in essence, so that no part of political or personal existence will be untouched by it." Mr. Mumford has a formula for radical social reconstruction, suggested by these passages from his book:

> Democracy must be prepared to play the human game with the same ruthless consistency that fascism plays the anti-human game. . . . We need an overwhelming force, ready to strike on behalf of liberty and democracy and justice with overwhelming audacity; ready, like the armies of Napoleon, to *impose* liberty and democracy if need be rather than to see them perish utterly from the earth.

Imaginary Conversation

The reviewer pertinently remarks that the trouble with Mr. Mumford's prescription for defending the spirit of democracy is that it means "losing the substance of democracy." (Government censorship to "protect" the people from subversive influences is part of Mumford's plan.) Nor is it altogether an exaggeration to say that "Dr. Goebbels often talks in the same vein, using almost the same words." Mr. Cowley concludes:

> Let us imagine a meeting that will never take place. Let us imagine a German diplomat discussing the book with Mr. Mumford. "It speaks harshly of my Leader," the German might say, "but I was not very angry because it pays him the compliment of borrowing many of his ideas. There are, however, three mistakes in 'Faith for Living' that I hope you will permit me to mention quite dispassionately. In the first place, it is written for the intellectuals, whereas if you really wish to effect a large-scale conversion you must hold meetings for the great public that does not read books. In the second place, you must supply that public not only with logical arguments but also with a whole mythology, with heroes to love and a single enemy to hate. In the third place—and this is most important—you will have to find a prophet for your new religion, a dreamer who is also a man of action, in other words, a Hitler.

"Civilization Has Gone Backward"

Harold S. Tuttle, professor of the philosophy of education at the College of the City of New York, in *School and Society* for Jan. 25, gives several concrete instances of a trend far more menacing than any theory in a book. He writes of actualities, of the way in which "Our Culture is Threatened"—*now,* and by our own actions. The social disintegration which follows "whispering campaigns" is one instance; the teacher who loses his post because he defended a radical's right to free speech is another. Then there is the following:

> A competent, thoughtful student of political problems, teaching in a great university in New York, becomes convinced that the cost of war is greater than its possible benefits. A wave of hysteria sweeps over the country. Publications are closed against his arguments. He is attacked as unpatriotic; he is dismissed from his professorship; he

> is socially ostracized. The culture which has been developing through a long process establishing the principle of academic freedom is gone. It is lost not only to him, the victim of blind persecution. It is lost to all those who have persecuted him, and to those who condone the persecution. Their sense of intellectual honesty is shriveled. The inner values which they had previously enjoyed they are now no longer able to enjoy. The total of culture has been diminished. Civilization has gone backward.

A World in Travail

All these commentaries and questionings, from MacLeish to Tuttle—and there are scores more written in the same vein—represent a determination to penetrate to the causes of the modern world crisis. "The old days of dogmatism," says *The Ocean of Theosophy,* "are gone and the 'age of inquiry' has come . . . the inquiries will grow louder year by year and the answers be required to satisfy the mind as it grows more and more." That partial answers have already been found is evident from the various statements quoted on the preceding pages. But it is also clear that the real explanation must await acceptance of the principles of Karma and Reincarnation. Meantime, men will and must act according to the knowledge they possess, and, so acting, come gradually to see the larger truth. Indeed, were it not for the fact that mankind seem to learn their lessons chiefly from the suffering they endure, the present scene could inspire little more than despair in the compassionate heart. "No child is born without the accompanying pains, and now the soul-mind of man is struggling for birth." It is faith and confidence in hidden potentialities of every human being, and reliance on the law of cyclic evolution that sustain the courage of theosophists, spurring them to redoubled efforts in the spread of truth, even as this terrible travail takes its inevitable toll in fear and wretchedness.

The "God of Abraham" Was Baal!

H. P. Blavatsky made a number of statements in utter conflict with both the scientific and the religious views of her time. Now and then a small item in the press, describing a new discovery, gives startling verification of some of her "strangest" ideas. This has been especially true in the field of science, for the Church, in the nature of things, is more reluctant to acknowledge that "new facts" may alter religious interpretation. It is nevertheless true that Biblical research, when scientifically carried on, sometimes uncovers striking facts, the more notable because many of them were treated as a matter of

course by H. P. B. Take for instance the recent findings of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, reported in *Time* for Jan. 13:

> Highlight of a colloquium on The Idea of God in the Ancient Near East was the assertion by Herbert Gordon May of Oberlin that the religion of the Hebrew patriarchs differed widely from that of Moses, and that Moses himself probably changed Gods during the Children of Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness during the Exodus. In Genesis the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is regularly referred to as El, and Professor May thinks he was akin to the Canaanite Ba'al.

This may astonish modern theologians, but not the students of *Isis Unveiled.* In Vol. II of this work (523, 524) it is stated that the early Jews worshiped Baal, and the identity of "El," the Sun-God of the Syrians, Egyptians and Semites, with the primeval Saturn, who represents Israel, is demonstrated. The Oberlin professor also recognizes the possibility, undoubtedly shocking to conventional Christians, that "the exodus from Egypt was under the aegis of the snake deity of the Levite tribe, Nehushtan." This has been known to theosophists for half a century. "Flying dragons," H. P. B. says in *The Secret Doctrine,* "served as prototypes for the Seraph of Moses and his great Brazen Serpent. The Jews had worshiped the latter idol themselves." (II, 387.) In a footnote she refers to "the brazen serpent that Moses had made," naming it "Nehushtan"!

Ancient Knowledge

Another modern investigator speaks of Solomon's "knowledge of technological principles," that "were not rediscovered until within memory of man." Several chapters of *Isis Unveiled* are devoted to such lost arts; Moses and the builders of the temple of Jerusalem were familiar with the principles of electricity—lightning rods were used on this building—and the great lighthouse of Alexandria was equipped with a reflecting telescope such as used in the most advanced instruments of today (I, 528). As modern researches of this sort proceed, the truth of H. P. B.'s prophecy at the conclusion of "The Veil of Isis" becomes increasingly evident. She wrote:

> The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archaeologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer and nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. Physical science has already reached its limits of exploration; dogmatic theology sees the springs of its inspiration dry. Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when

the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun (I, 38).

"Astrology"

Modern astrology was formally denounced in a recent report of the Boston and Cambridge Branch of the American Association of Scientific Workers (New York *Times,* Jan. 24). Claiming horoscope-casting to be a "completely unscientific 'miracle practice,' harmful to both true scientific progress and healthy social psychology," the committee recommended virtual injunction against practitioners by wider and more effective law enforcement. According to the *Times* summary,

> . . . the group found that "astrologers have failed to suggest a workable mechanism by which the stars and planets can exert their influence on human destiny," and also that astrologers can claim no statistical evidence proving a correlation between stellar movements and human activities.
>
> In the past astrology has hampered scientific work in astronomy, has had a "strangling" influence on medicine and hindered the development of chemistry, the investigators reported.
>
> "Astrology is now trying once more to gain recognition as a science by the use of methods that are strangely reminiscent of those used with success during the Middle Ages."

A Persistent Tradition

Though the mercenary traffic of most of the astrologers of the day stands justly self-condemned, scientists would do better by directing their attention to discovering *why* the popular superstition of destiny proclaimed by the stars has prevailed through the ages. Prohibition and suppression, in whatever time or guise, seem never to have completely made away with this ancient faith. A more thoughtful scientist, the modern psychologist Dr. Carl Jung, has this to say on the subject:

> . . . at least there are some facts adequately tested and fortified by a wealth of statistics which make the astrological problem seem

worthy of philosophical investigation. (It is assured of recognition from psychology, without further restrictions, because astrology represents the summation of all the psychological knowledge of antiquity.)

The fact that it is possible to construct, in adequate fashion, a person's character from the data of his nativity, shows the relative validity of astrology. (*The Secret of The Golden Flower,* Wilhelm and Jung, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1935.)

This is written in the true spirit of science. Dr. Jung recognizes that there is some foundation of fact in astrology, says so, and withholds final judgment. The difficulty which confronts the modern astrologer was briefly stated by H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled:*

Astrology is a science as *infallible* as astronomy itself, with the condition, however, that its interpreters must be equally infallible; and it is this condition, *sine qua non,* so very difficult of realization, that has always proved a stumbling-block to both. Astrology is to exact astronomy what psychology is to exact physiology. In astrology and psychology one has to step beyond the visible world of matter, and enter into the domain of transcendent spirit (I, 259).

"GENES" AND LONG LIFE

Modern genetics teaches that variations as to form, mental capacities, and so on, among members of a family, are differentiations of the physical heredity of that family. According to Mendelian doctrine, inherited characteristics may be either "dominant," or "recessive," depending on the arrangement of the "genes"—those hypothetical carriers of heritable traits which are supposed to make up the chromosomes within the nucleus of the germ cell. For example, if in a certain family small hands and brown eyes are parental "dominants," and offspring inherits large hands and blue eyes, a reversion to an ancestral "recessive," carried over in the "gene," is said to be indicated. Dr. Lewellys F. Barker of Johns Hopkins Medical School, now adds to the list of heritable traits that of longevity:

A man's life span from birth to death, Dr. Barker said, can be represented by a graph whose curvature is predetermined at the moment the human ovum is fertilized by the sperm cell. Except for a premature termination by disease or violence, life "pursues the path that is determined for it by the inherent qualities of the genes from which it starts," Dr. Barker asserted.

"Longevity is exquisitely hereditary," he said. "The best insurance of long personal existence is derivation from long-lived ancestors." (New York *Times,* Jan. 9.)

"Limit of Tensile Strain"

From the theosophic viewpoint, Dr. Barker is "half" right. It is true that the human life span is "predetermined" from birth, but this is not caused simply by physical heredity, despite the fact that such may appear to be the case from a study of long-lived families. It would be only natural that egos destined to have a long cycle of existence incarnate in families where this karmic tendency is pronounced. The occult physiology of the question is stated by Mr. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy*. The body, he says, is subject to physical, physiological, and psychical laws which govern the race of man as a whole. "Hence its period of possible continuance can be calculated just as the limit of tensile strain among the metals used in bridge building can be deduced by the engineer." Elsewhere he explains that the astral body is the cohesive principle within the physical organism. While the latter is constantly changing, this inner form "alters only from life to life, being constructed at the time of reincarnation to last for a whole period of existence." The length of this period is set by individual Karma. The genes, if they really exist, are but representatives of the astral body.

> It is the model fixed by the present evolutionary proportions for the outer body. It is the collector, as it were, of the visible atoms which make us as we outwardly appear. So at birth it is potentially of a certain size, and when the limit is reached it stops further extension of the body, making possible what are known today as average weights and average sizes. At the same time the outer body is kept in shape by the inner one until the period of decay. And this decay, followed by death, is not due to bodily disintegration *per se,* but to the fact that the term of the astral body is reached, when it is no longer able to hold the outer frame intact. Its power to resist the impact and war of the material molecules being exhausted, the sleep of death supervenes (Theosophy I, 190).

Bones Are "Plastic"

Further evidence of the functions of the astral body is provided by Dr. Charles A. Davenport, of the Carnegie Institute of Washington. Bone, he finds, is something more than the "solid, unyielding, unchanging stuff it has been assumed to be." The mineral kindom has long been thought "lifeless," because "inorganic." Calcium and other mineral salts which enter largely into skeletal structure, not being supposed to possess an organization of their own, could not, therefore, be sensitive to organic stimuli. The story today is dis-

tinctly otherwise. Bone cells, Dr. Davenport has discovered, ar responsive to stimuli, much as other types of cell. Says the New Yor *Times* of Dec. 9, 1940:

> [Bone] is a decidedly plastic material, molding and remolding itself readily, though slowly, in response to external conditions. Dr. Davenport cited especially the behavior of the slender, transverse bracing rods that are found in many parts of the skeleton, especially the limb bones. Because they resemble the bracing timbers of a house or bridge not only in form but in function, they have been named the "trabeculae," which means "little beams."
>
> If a broken bone is badly set, so that muscular strains no longer affect it in the same directions, new trabeculae will be formed within it, thrusting in the lines of the new strains, Dr. Davenport stated. He also cited the case of two crippled young women, one of whom had been bedridden all her life, the other since she was 10 years old. The first patient has a heel-bone shaped roughly like that of a normal child but without the properly directed trabeculae. The second, who walked for a short time before she became crippled, has a nearly normally shaped heel-bone, but only a few directed trabeculae.
>
> "The conclusion seems to be justified," said Dr. Davenport, "that the bone-forming cells respond to directive thrusts and pulls that are made upon normally functioning bones by forming the trabeculae in adaptive positions. Thus the bone cells are as truly responsive as muscle cells, but respond to different stimuli in a different way."

This conclusion corroborates statements made more than half a century ago by William Q. Judge. Bones, he said, the "earthy matter" of the body, have in common with the rest of the variously divided sheaths of the organism "their own peculiar impressions and recollections." These impressions and recollections, inhering in the atoms of the cells, constitute precisely those "responses" described by Dr. Davenport. Further study of this article ("Mesmerism," Theosophy I, 183) would disclose *why* the bone cells respond to given stimuli in a certain way and no other. The missing factor is, of course, the astral, inner man.

A Correction

On page 195 of Theosophy for March, it is implied that during the 30's of the last century, the French popularizer of materialism, Cabanis, was actively engaged in spreading his theory that the brain "secretes thought" as the liver secretes bile. Cabanis, however, died in 1808, so that it was rather the wider dissemination of his ideas which was proceeding about 100 years ago.